



U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman

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News Advisory

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Sensenbrenner Highlights PATRIOT Act Conference Report Civil Liberty Safeguard #15

WASHINGTON, D.C. – With the PATRIOT Act set to expire in just over two weeks unless the Senate approves the conference report, House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-Wis.) today highlighted another one of the dozens of civil liberties safeguards included in the PATRIOT Act conference report approved last month by a bipartisan majority of the House and pending before the U.S. Senate.

PATRIOT Act Conference Report Civil Liberty Safeguard #15 – Requiring Additional Reporting to Congress by the Justice Department on Use of National Security Letters (NSLs):

The PATRIOT Act conference report enhances congressional oversight over the use of NSLs by requiring additional classified reporting to Congress on the use of NSL authorities. **Specifically, the conference report requires the House and Senate Judiciary Committees to receive all classified reports regarding use of NSLs; currently these committees only receive classified reports under one of the five statutes authorizing NSLs.** This additional reporting will help the Judiciary Committees fulfill their oversight responsibilities, which include protecting civil liberties and oversight over law enforcement in addition to subversive activities and internal threats. This civil liberty safeguard contained in the conference report does not exist under current law and was written by Rep. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.).

Originally created by a Democrat-led Congress and signed into law by President Carter, NSLs are a long-standing tool by which the FBI and other appropriate federal law enforcement officials request, for sensitive foreign spying or international terrorism investigations, subscriber information and toll billing records of a wire or electronic communication service provider, such as a phone company or AOL.

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